

October 27, 2011

Agenda Item I.1 (Highly Migratory Species)

My name is Wayne Moody and I have been fishing albacore for over 35 years. US albacore fishermen are increasingly aware that pressure is coming from management bodies to cap effort or reduce effort and/or catch in the future, the council should be aware of the foreign catch in US waters and how that may affect the eventual US slice of any allocation. By addressing this now the US can be proactive in fisheries management in a way that does not hurt local fishermen and businesses.

I want to convey my concerns and feelings to the Council about the US/Canadian Albacore Treaty that has been in effect since 1981.

For years, I have been a supporter of the treaty and the potential benefit for the US fishing industry. Over the years, I have listened to arguments both “for and against” the treaty. But water under the “keel” has changed my thinking.

My view:

The treaty is no longer a benefit to US fishermen.

It has actually become a detriment to the US industry. For instance, this year was especially frustrating due to the nature of the scattered schools of fish. After spending considerable time, expense, and effort to locate a good producing school of fish, it was only a matter of time before a Canadian fisherman would find us and then we would be overrun with Canadian fishermen. The “available biting fish” would then be divided amongst a larger number of fishermen. Also, due to the Canadian fishermen’s aggressive style of fishing, we would many times leave a spot early to avoid any stress or conflicts. This scenario was repeated many times during the season. I personally feel my production was reduced by 15-20% because of this issue. If this is true for the whole US fleet, US buyers also suffered since they would have received 15-20% more fish from the US industry. This would more than offset the tonnage delivered by Canadian fishermen to our US buyers.

Other issues with the treaty are:

1. Increased vessel size (capacity) of the Canadian vessels since the treaty was negotiated.
2. Canadian’s 4 ½ months in US waters fishing versus fish being “available” for US fishermen in Canadian waters for possibly 1 ½-2 months, if at all. (See statistics)
3. No mention in the treaty, who will get credit for fish caught by Canadian fish caught in the US EEZ if/when country quotas are implemented by international organizations.
4. There is no increase in vessel size limit restriction. (There is a limit for replacing a vessel during the fishing season. That limit is 10 feet, which could possibly more than double the capacity of the replacement vessel!)

Thank you for allowing me to bring my concerns to your attention.

Sincerely,

Wayne Moody